



Lift Owner News

Subject: 2015 Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings

Approved Document M *Access to and use of buildings* was revised in 2015 and gives guidance on complying with building regulations in England and Wales. It is now split into two sections:

- Volume 1 *Dwellings* applies to new dwellings and dwellings undergoing material alteration and contains updated guidance. It introduces three categories of dwellings:
 - Category 1 - Visitable dwellings
 - Category 2 - Accessible and adaptable dwellings
 - Category 3 - Wheelchair user dwellings

The requirements for category 1 always apply; those for categories 2 and 3 apply when they are conditions of planning permission.

- Volume 2 *Buildings other than dwellings* incorporates previous amendments but there have been no technical changes.

For category 1, visitable dwellings, “a passenger lift is the most convenient way for many people to move from one storey to another”. The requirement can be met if communal lifts have a minimum 400 kg load, internal dimensions of 900 mm wide x 1250 mm deep and 800 mm wide doors. Specifiers would be well advised to specify a type 1 lift as described in BS EN 81-70 as this is slightly larger and will accommodate a wider range of wheelchair users.

For category 2, accessible and adaptable dwellings, the guidance for communal lifts is for every passenger lift that gives access to the dwelling to be a type 2 lift conforming to BS EN 81-70. This car size, 1100 mm wide x 1400 mm deep, is recognized as the smallest which allows an accompanied wheelchair user to access and use the lift.

There are two groups of lifting appliances recommended for category 3, wheelchair user dwellings. For the approach to the dwelling, communal lifts should be a type 2 lift conforming to BS EN 81-70 as described above. Within the dwelling, the guidance differs according to whether the dwelling is wheelchair adaptable or wheelchair accessible:

- For wheelchair adaptable dwellings, it is sufficient to allow a space into which a lift could easily be installed with minimum liftway dimensions of 1100 mm x 1650 mm. It should be noted that these dimensions, especially for more than two storeys, are likely to restrict the size of lifting appliance which could be incorporated at a later date and so LEIA would recommend that specifiers allow larger dimensions.
- For wheelchair accessible buildings, two types of lifting appliance are recognized:
 - A through floor homelift to BS 5900; suitable only for two floor applications.
 - An enclosed lifting platform to BS EN 81-41. The guidance notes that the liftway dimensions stated may not be sufficient. LEIA would agree and recommend that specifiers allow larger dimensions.